

Welcome to **Bell Mountain Wilderness**

This 9,143-acre Wilderness is part of the St. Francois Mountains, one of the oldest landforms in North America. The Wilderness is named for a family that once lived and farmed along the ridge top that is now known as Bell Mountain. Elevations range from 1,702 feet at Bell Mountain to 970 feet in the Joe's Creek drainage. Local relief is about 600 feet and is characterized by steep felsite and rhyolite outcroppings. Both Bell Mountain and Lindsey Mountain offer outstanding views of the surrounding area. The associated granite glades provide a variety of interesting plant and animal life.

The area is accessible from Potosi via Highway 21 south to Highway 32, then west on Highway 32 approximately 7 miles to Highway A. A trailhead is located about 2 miles off Highway A along Forest Road 2228; another trailhead is located on Highway A approximately 5 miles south of Highway 32. There are approximately 11.9 miles of trails maintained for hikers, including a small segment of the Ozark Trail.

Oak and hickory are the predominate tree species, with some areas of natural oak-pine and some short leaf pine plantations. Upland, brush and red cedar make up a small portion of the vegetative component. Blackjack oak, winged elm, hickories, sumac, and native grasses are found on the glades. Lichens abound on the exposed-surface rock. Some areas on Bell Mountain that were cleared in the 1940's now have almost pure stands of young Northern Red Oak.

Shut-in Creek crosses the area. It is a perennial spring fed stream with several shut-in, or gorges along its course. Steep talus slopes intersect the stream course at several locations. Joe's Creek is another small perennial stream within the Wilderness.

Bell Mountain Wilderness provides a unique habitat situation not typical of the majority of Missouri's Ozarks. The predominately oak-hickory forest is interspersed with pine and scattered glades resulting in a diversity of plant species more common to old growth forest. This habitat situation favors mature forest species such as pileated woodpeckers, woodthrush and oven birds. Moderate populations of most game species such as white-tailed deer, wild turkeys and squirrels can be found. Overall it gives the visitor a chance to see a unique environment with a different combination of plant and animal communities not found in other areas of the Missouri Ozarks.



WILDERNESS MANNERS AND REGULATIONS

Wilderness is a special area designated and set aside by Congress as a natural area affected primarily by the forces of



Nature with little evidence of man's works "where man himself is a visitor who does not remain." Many individuals seek out its peace and solitude. yet it has different meanings and values to different people depending on whether they are backpackers, hunters, photographers, or hikers.

Increasing numbers of Wilderness users may seriously impact the very values they seek. To ensure that these values remain intact, please practice good wilderness manners and comply with the following regulations. Continue the legacy: make sure that others will not see evidence of your visit.

WILDERNESS REGULATIONS

There are certain human impacts that could damage or destroy the wilderness resource. Keep your group size to ten or less. The following practices are not allowed within Bell Mountain Wilderness:

Possessing or leaving refuse, debris or litter in an exposed or unsanitary condition;

Placing in or near a stream, lake, or other water any substance that does or may pollute a stream, lake, or other water;

Leaving a fire without completely extinguishing it;

Cutting or defacing live or dead standing trees or other vegetation;

Possessing or using a motor vehicle, motorboat, motorized equipment or mechanical transport, including bicycles;

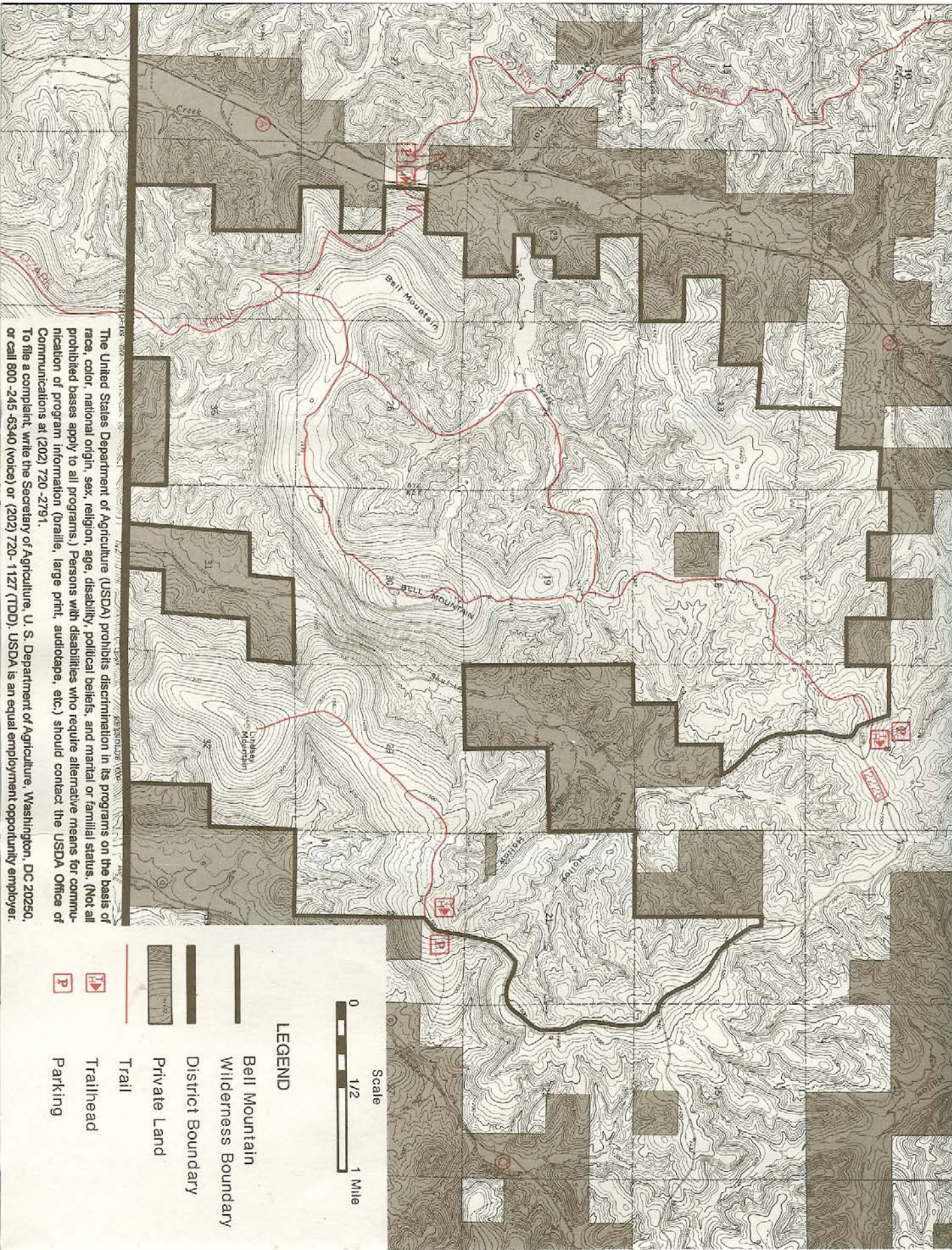
Landing of aircraft, or dropping or picking up any material, supplies or persons by means of aircraft, including helicopters;

Building of 'structures' such as rock fire rings, tables, lean-tos, etc;

Discharging a firearm or any other implement capable of taking human life or causing injury, in or within 150 yards of an occupied area, or in any manner or place whereby any person or property is exposed to injury or damage as a result of such discharge;

No firing any tracer bullet or incendiary ammunition.

Missouri Department of Conservation hunting and fishing regulations and license requirements apply.



Bell Mountain Wilderness Map



WILDERNESS MANNERS

Protect the solitude; seek campsites that are out of sight and sound of trails and other camps. When sharing an area keep a low profile and maintain the solitude.

Avoid overuse of popular areas, and search out the lesser-known attractions.

Be prepared - have the right equipment and clothing for primitive travel and season of the year. Carry a good map and compass; practice safety, and carry and know how to use a first aid kit. The universal distress signal is three of anything: shots, shouts, smokes, or whistles.

When traveling on a trail, stay on the trail. When traveling cross – country, use your map and compass. Avoid the use of blazes, ribbons or other trail markers; let the next fellow find his own way, as you did.

Pack your own shelter, including poles and stakes.

Saddle and pack stock have the right-of-way on trails.

Don't tie saddle and pack stock to trees. It's better to hobble or tie a rope between two large trees and use it as a hitch rail. When breaking camp, scatter manure and smooth the area.

Avoid prolonged stock grazing in one area. Bring concentrated supplemental stock feed to help reduce the impact on vegetation.

Picket your stock at least 200 feet away from waterways, trails, or camps.

Bell Mountain Wilderness is surrounded by private property. Please respect the rights and property of private landowners.

GENERAL COMMENTS

The Ozark climate is mild enough to make Wilderness visits feasible throughout the year, as long as visitors bring proper gear. When possible, take advantage of this opportunity and plan your visit outside the peak spring and fall use seasons.

Drinking water is not available in Bell Mountain Wilderness, open water sources within the wilderness are not recommended for drinking. Bring your own drinking water or be prepared to boil or treat water chemically.

Visiting the Wilderness is a primitive experience: trails are not well marked, and there are no bridges crossing streams.

USGS quadrangle maps can be purchased from the Forest Service or the U.S. Geological Survey. The Wilderness is located on the Johnson Mountain, Banner, Edgehill and Johnson Shut-ins quadrangle maps. A map of the Potosi District can be purchased at Mark Twain National Forest offices.

Wilderness Rangers frequently visit trailheads and patrol the interior of the area. They are there to assist you and answer your questions. Have a pleasant wilderness experience and remember, leave only footprints and take only photographs and memories.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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